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HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

VOL. XVII. No. 43 AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1953 TWO ANNAS

NOTES

The Nagpur Air Crash

In a country like ours where we can hardly be said to be air-minded at all, the news of an air crash is indeed a very tragic and horribly frightening experience. A few days back we heard that Shri Namjoshi, said to be one of our very promising air pilot, died in a crash at Bangalore. Only a few days after, we learnt of a still more tragic crash at Nagpur which, in a moment of ill-fate took away 13 good souls from our midst. The poignancy of the news is still more heightened when we learnt that some of them were reputed servants of the people like Shri Hariharnath Shastri, Shri Saran etc. We heartily sympathize with the bereaved families of all the deceased and send our condolences to them. The loss of a great fighter for India's freedom and a devoted worker and lover of the poor and the downtrodden like Shri H. N. Shastri is irreparable, chiefly to labour, whom he so ably served. It is good the Government of India has instituted an inquiry into the Nagpur air crash. The State Air Corporation should take the people into confidence and restore it which got shocked at the news of the crash.

17-12-'53 M. P.

Pakistan's Plighted Word

The Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact of April, 1950, about the status of minorities in the two countries — India and Pakistan, affirmed in very clear terms that, —

> "The Governments of India and Pakistan solemnly agree that each shall ensure to the minorities throughout its territory complete equality of citizenship, irrespective of religion, a full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property and personal honour, freedom of movement within each country and freedom of occupation, speech, and worship, subject to law and morality. Members of the minorities shall have equal opportunity with members of the majority community to participate in the public life of their country, to hold political or other office, and to serve in their country's civil and armed forces. Both Governments declare these rights to be fundamental and undertake to enforce them effectively. The Prime Minister of India has drawn attention to the fact that these rights are guaranteed to all minorities in India by its Constitution. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has pointed out that similar provision exists in the Objectives Resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. It is the policy of both Governments that the enjoyment of these democratic rights shall be assured to all their nationals without distinction."

This must be considered as the Charter of Freedom for the Minorities in the two countries. It was a solemn undertaking by Prime Ministers of both the countries, — their plighted word to their own respective minorities and to each other as well. Will Pakistan honour it? Let us hope, what has been decided at present is only tentative and will be revised in due manner and in terms of this agreement between the two countries.

17-12-'53 M. P.

BHOODAN WAY FOR THE PRINCES

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

We remember the conditions under which almost all privy purses contracts were made with the Princes a few years ago. As the Prime Minister said in reply to a question in the Council of States the other day, the Government was then faced with a tremendous problem of changing over from foreign rule to Swaraj, from hundreds of Indian principalities suddenly allowed to feel sovereign by a trick of the British rulers' pen to one Indian rule of the people, by the people and for the people.

The problem was solved as rapidly and peacefully as it was created, by the magic persuasion and far-sighted sagacity of the Sardar, who was then in charge of the States portfolio. The Princes acceded to the Union of India and were guaranteed certain rights and privy purses under the Constitution. One of the few things that made it possible for us to frame our free Constitution for one United India so readily and well was this act of patriotic understanding and agreement on the part of the Princes.

However, some sections of our people felt that the privy purses were too great a burden for poor India to bear, specially when she needed to pool all her resources for development projects of nation-building. The Princes perhaps felt safe under the Constitutional guarantee. Therefore there were voices asking to change the Constitution. The Prime Minister, we all know now, took a new line to achieve the object and wrote letters to the Princes receiving a privy purse of Rs 1,00,000 or more. The response seems to be

gathering wind and we hope it will be in full sails soon.

In this regard, a member of the Council of States asked the Prime Minister whether it would not be better to amend the Constitution than to use persuasion. The Prime Minister replied, "It is not merely a matter of Constitution ; it is a matter of contract or agreement. One should therefore proceed on the basis of agreement as far as possible." This is surely a good instance of the Bhoodan way, which is at present attracting the eye of the world as a peculiar thing of our culture and mind. We hope the Princes will rise to the occasion and earn even greater honour and name in the building of New India. May they realize that the sooner they acquire the noble status of a commoner, the better it will be for them as well as their mother-land.

9-12-'53

INVASION OF WESTERN CULTURE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

(*By Arnold Toynbee*)

II

[The first instalment of the article was out in the previous issue of 12-12-'53. This concludes the article.]

There seems to be something like a common psychology of encounters ; and this is a subject of practical interest and importance today, when the sudden 'annihilation of distance', through the achievements of our Western technology, has brought face to face, at point-blank range, half a dozen societies, each of which, until yesterday, was living its own life in its own way almost as independently of its neighbours as if each society had been marooned on a planet of its own instead of living in the same world with the other representatives of its kind.

Here we have an example of something that seems often to happen when the culture-ray of a radioactive civilization hits a foreign body social. The assaulted foreign body's resistance diffracts the culture-ray into its component strands, just as a light-ray is diffracted into the spectrum by the resistance of a prism.

When a travelling culture-ray is diffracted into its component strands — technology, religion, politics, art, and so on — by the resistance of a foreign body social upon which it has impinged, its technological strand is apt to penetrate faster and farther than its religious strand ; and this law can be formulated in more general terms. We can say that the penetrative power of a strand of cultural radiation is usually in inverse ratio to this strand's cultural value. A trivial strand arouses less resistance in the assaulted body social than is aroused by a crucial strand, because the trivial strand does not threaten to cause so violent or so painful a disturbance of the assaulted body's traditional way of life. This automatic selection of the most trivial elements in a radioactive culture for the widest dissemination abroad is obviously an unfortunate rule of the game of cultural intercourse ; but this premium on triviality is not the game's worst point. The very process of diffraction, which is of the essence of the game, threatens to poison the life of the society whose body social is being penetrated by the diverse strands of a diffracted culture-ray.

III

Analogies taken from physics and medicine may be used to illustrate this point. Since our discovery of the trick of splitting the atom, we have learnt to our cost that the particles composing an atom of some inoffensive element cease to be innocuous and become dangerously corrosive so soon as they have been split off from the orderly society of particles of which an atom is constituted, and have been sent flying by themselves on independent careers of their own. We have learnt, too — not to our own cost in this case, but to the cost of the once secluded surviving representatives of Primitive Man — that a disease which is a mild one for us, because it has been rife among us so long that we have developed an effective resistance to it, may prove deadly to South Sea Islanders who have been exempt from it before being suddenly exposed to it by the arrival among them of its European carriers.

A loose strand of cultural radiation, like a loose electron or a loose contagious disease, may prove deadly when it is disengaged from the system within which it has been functioning hitherto and is set free to range abroad by itself in a different milieu. In its original setting, this culture-strand or bacillus or electron was restrained from working havoc because it was kept in order by its association with other components of a pattern in which the diverse participants were in equilibrium. In escaping from its original setting, the liberated particle, bacillus, or culture-strand will not have changed its nature ; but the same nature will produce a deadly effect, instead of a harmless one, now that the creature has broken loose from its original associations. In these circumstances, 'one man's meat' can become 'another man's poison'.

The truth is that every historic culture-pattern is an organic whole in which all the parts are interdependent, so that, if any part is prised out of its setting, both the isolated part and the mutilated whole behave differently from their behaviour when the pattern is intact. This is why 'one man's meat' can be 'another man's poison' ; and another consequence is that 'one thing leads to another'. If a splinter is flaked off from one culture and is introduced into foreign body social, this isolated splinter will tend to draw in after it, into the foreign body in which it has lodged, the other component elements of the social system in which this splinter is at home and from which it has been forcibly and unnaturally detached. The broken pattern tends to reconstitute itself in a foreign environment into which one of its components has once found its way.

If we want to see how, in the game of cultural intercourse, this process of one thing

leading to another works in practice, let us look at one or two concrete examples.

In our own day in India, President Ataturk's great Hindu contemporary the Mahatma Gandhi did realize that in cultural intercourse one thing insidiously leads to another. Gandhi saw that a myriad threads of cotton — grown in India, perhaps, but spun in Lancashire and woven there into clothes for India's people — were threatening to entangle India with the Western world in gossamer meshes that might soon be as hard to break as if they had been steel fetters. Gandhi saw that, if Hindus went on wearing clothes made by Western machinery in the West, they would soon take to using the same Western machinery in India for the same purpose. First they would import jennies and power-looms from England; then they would learn how to build these implements for themselves; next they would be leaving their fields in order to work in their new Indian cotton-mills and Indian foundries; and, when they had become used to spending their working-time doing Western jobs, they would take to spending their leisure on Western amusements — movies, talkies, greyhound racing, and the rest — till they would find themselves growing Western souls and forgetting how to be Hindus. With a prophet's vision the Mahatma saw this grain of cotton-seed waxing into a great tree whose spreading branches would overshadow a continent; and this Hindu prophet called upon his Hindu countrymen to save their Hindu souls by laying an axe to this rank Western tree's roots. He set them the example of spending a certain time every day on spinning and weaving Indian cotton by hand, in the old-fashioned Indian way, for Indian bodies to wear, because he saw that this severance of the germinal economic ties between India and the West was the only sure means of saving the Hindu society from going Western, body and soul.

There was no flaw in the Mahatma Gandhi's insight. The Westernization of India that he foreboded and sought to avert was, and is, fast developing out of that one original grain of cotton-seed; and Gandhi's remedy for India's Western infection was the right one. Only the prophet failed to induce his disciples to follow him in preserving India's cultural independence at this price in economic austerity. The wearing of machine-made cotton goods could not have been renounced by the Indian people in Gandhi's generation without lowering the Indian peasantry's already intolerably low standard of living, and without putting out of business altogether the new classes of Indian cotton operatives and Indian mill-owners that had already sprung up from India's soil in Bombay and in Gandhi's own second home, Ahmedabad. Gandhi has made an immense and perhaps permanent mark on the history of India and of the world; but the irony of history has condemned him to make this mark, not by saving India from economic Westernization, but by speeding her along the path of political Westernization through leading her triumphantly to the Western political goal of national self-government. Even Gandhi's genius was no match for the remorseless working of a social 'law'. In a cultural encounter, one thing inexorably goes on leading to another when once the smallest breach has been made in the assaulted society's defences.

(Concluded)

"TOOLS OR MARKETS?"

(*By P. C. Mansukhani*)

The article under the above caption in the *Harijan* dated 14th November, '53 by Shri Maurice Frydman gives rise to the fundamental issue 'where to draw the line beyond which the research will not go further'. Experience has shown, once a man gets into the hands of a labour-saving device, there is little telling what ultimately it would lead to. The inner harmony and rhythm with nature is lost or tends to diminish the moment man puts in his hands the use of a gadget which has for its objective the saving of time and labour. The moment we put in the hands of the villagers tools and machines at cheap cost on easy credit coupled with cheap power beginning would have been made for bringing about conditions which we seek to avoid or replace.

These gadgets make the hands and the feet ply faster than what the mind's movement can cope with; in the result the mind and the moving limbs get out of gear and harmony. This process repeated day after day ultimately deadens the mind and makes it restless. For redress man seeks to move out. This leads to his trek to the nearest city. In the result we find ourselves caught unawares into conditions from which we find it difficult if not impossible to extricate. One would therefore agree in toto with the person who wrote to the friend of Maurice Frydman that arming artisans with modern technique places the backward artisans at a disadvantage.

All this long the villages in India have been kept free from the inroads of modern techniqued cheap tools and cheap power. We have to be very wary before introducing in them the cheap handy tools and benefits of cheap power. It was better to spend all that money and energy that went to produce cheap tools — the product of modern technique — and cheap power in imparting basic education to the village folk and thereby train their minds to evolve for themselves a better regulated life as to be more creative in its results, bringing in its wake better living conditions and healthier and prosperous surroundings. If need be we should rather attempt to divide India in Rural and Urban Indias each having its own self-government so that at least a definite line is drawn to demarcate the two and prevent further inroads on the life and economy of the former retaining thereby intact the bulwark which has protected and sustained through centuries on end our culture and religion.

HARIJAN

Dec. 26 1953

THE LONG AND SHORT OF UNEMPLOYMENT

(*By Maganbhai P. Desai*)

In the course of a debate in the Parliament on unemployment, the Finance Minister is reported to have said as follows :

> "Mr Deshmukh said that from the long-term aspect an answer to the problem of unemployment was rapid development of industries by promoting capital formation at a high rate. The short-term solution was one of providing relief which must be linked up with development work."

So, the long and short of unemployment, according to him, is that there should be more money available, so that Government can undertake further development programmes which will incidentally employ a few more people. We know that the Five-Year Plan is not primarily meant to solve our crying need of perennial unemployment in the country. The Plan did not care even to study it and place it before the country. It safely by-passed it by saying that some more people were surely going to be needed for the new works and the Plan at this stage could go no further. But the problem has been with us and, thank God, it has now compelled even grudging attention from the Government. As a result we see that something is being thought to be done to ease the situation and hush the question in some temporary manner.

And the manner as thought out by the Finance Minister is as follows :

> "Mr Deshmukh said that the Government were prepared to treat unemployment relief as an extension of the famine relief. The money set apart from famine funds could be allotted to schemes for running test works so as to absorb the unemployed.
>
> "The educated unemployed, Mr Deshmukh thought, could be utilized in the collection of nation-wide statistics."

Putting unemployment which is a permanent malaise of our economy on a famine basis which is an accident is something really surprising, though ingenious from the point of view of a finance member who is suddenly required to find money for immediate relief so that there might be poured some oil on the disturbed waters of public opinion against unemployment which is getting vocal and politically disturbant. It is a very unfortunate thing for India that our fundamental question is being treated in this light manner by the authorities at the Centre. The will-o'-the-wisp of capital formation and the policy of changing the shape of things through money, that is being pursued by them, is a dangerous symptom of the reckless disregard of the utter misery of our masses and their needs. To try to tackle the problem of unemployment through industrialization is surely courting disaster if not evading the issue. Or it may be that the Government of India believes and has faith in the policy of capital-intensive industries, and consequent centralization of economic power in the hands of the Government and/or a few rich persons whom Government will be allowing to prosper at the cost of the many and to its own narrow advantage of tax-income from them. If this is so, well might it say so in clear terms and not say, as it does in its plans, that small-scale and village industries also have a very definite place in our expanding economy.

A further thing that is very much surprising in the Finance Minister's statement in Parliament is that he does not seem to be aware of the extent or size of the problem facing us ; or he does not care to note it for reasons best known to him. What about under-employment or rural unemployment in our agriculture ? A close student of this problem tells me that,

"It has been estimated that about 25 per cent of the total agricultural working population is underemployed. That means that approximately 25 per cent of the agricultural population could safely be removed without affecting agricultural production. The problem then is to provide employment to about 6 crores of agricultural workers. If we take into account the rate of growth of population at about 1¼ per cent per annum, the magnitude of this problem further increases.

"We have to provide employment to these people in fields other than agriculture. From that point of view, industrialization is doubtless the remedy for this problem. But then what industries shall we start ?

"This decision inevitably depends upon the size of our resources. Since our capital resources are scarce and our manpower is abundant, we have to combine the two in such a proportion as to provide full employment to both. Can this be done by starting industries which are highly capital-intensive ?

"If a few highly capital-intensive large-scale industries are started, we will soon use up our scarce capital resources and will have no implements or tools left for providing employment to the unemployed.

"I recognize the need for the establishment of certain basic facilities like hydro-electric power, irrigation, etc. I also recognize the need for starting certain key and defence industries. But apart from these industries, I feel that if the employment problem is to be effectively tackled, we will have to concentrate on highly labour-intensive cottage and small-scale industries. Moreover, if we want to utilize our labour force fully

and effectively, I feel that villages should be encouraged to become self-sufficient as far as their day-to-day needs are concerned.

"Even, output of goods and services would be much greater if both our capital and labour resources were fully employed than what it would be if the capital resources were fully employed but a large part of our labour force remained unemployed.

"Full employment of labour, it should be realized, is necessary, not merely for increasing our output; it is also necessary for bringing about its equitable distribution. Even from the moral point of view, the need for full employment is paramount."

In the recent discussion in Parliament on the non-official resolution on unemployment the Ministries of Finance and Planning made statements on what they proposed to do about the problem. We must confess that they hardly touched it. Let us hope the second Five-Year Plan bases itself chiefly on this and the coming elections focus the issue in clear terms before the people and for the next Government of India.

17-12-'53

THINK OF THE OBLIGATION TO SOCIETY *

(By Vinoba)

The human body has a lesson to teach us regarding the way the society should organize its life so as to function efficiently. The body cannot work well if one of its limbs grows anaemic while another grows abnormally strong, because this disturbs its harmony. But it works well if all the limbs are nourished equally according to their need. The hands and feet and all the other limbs are inter-related parts of the body and must maintain a happy balance with one another so as to keep the body in a state of good health. The society is also an organism like the human body of which the individuals who compose it are constituent limbs. Some are its eyes, others are the nose, still others are its hands and feet, and so on. And all of them must be equally well cared for to keep the body social in good health.

But if some of them have excessive wealth, while others have little or none at all, if some are provided with facilities for education and are able to secure the B.A. and M.A. degrees and in a few cases even to proceed to America for the so-called higher studies while others are denied the opportunity even to learn the three R's, the society is bound to suffer from distemper. The society which permits such unjust inequalities among its members can never hope to be happy. Food and education are primary wants and must be secured to all the members of the society without any distinction. Then we must give land to the landless cultivators who, though they cultivate the land and produce all our food for us, are living at present in a state of near-serfdom. And if there is at any point more than necessary accumulation of wealth, it must be redistributed among the needy. Otherwise tensions between different groups are bound to arise and there can be no peace, much less any progress. All the individuals constituting the society must work and render to the whole of which they are parts such service as they are capable of, then only can the society be happy. If on the other hand we permit among ourselves millions to live without education, without medicine and without shelter, they shall become a burden to the society which it can hardly bear. In the same way, if we permit a few to own vast acres of land or huge piles of wealth, they will prove unable to utilize it to the best advantage. We have therefore put forward the suggestion that we must all of us think first of our obligation to the society and give it an adequate portion of what we have. Every one must give what he has more than others; it may be land or wealth or labour or intelligence. The possessors of intelligence might say that they are already doing it. But no, they are doing it at present in return for money. They should now begin to do it, so far as the poor are concerned, free of any charge. The lawyers, doctors and teachers, for example, should resolve to give their services to the poor without charging any fees. At present the poor have to go without justice, without medicine, and without education. Free service for the poor by lawyers, doctors and teachers in their respective fields will place these boons of civilized society in their reach and greatly benefit the nation. Thus all must contribute a portion of their possessions to the society. We have begun with the distribution of land because that is fundamental to the rebuilding of our economy, but the process has to be widened and worked out in every other field.

One cannot say that one owns air or water or the sun. In the same way, one cannot say that one owns land. Just as air, water and the sun are freely available to all, even so all must be allowed to have a claim on land, which is equally a gift of God. Could He wish that a small minority should arrogate all the land to themselves and the vast majority, which actually works on it, be kept debarred from it? God does not speak as we do, but there is within each of us the voice of the conscience which is His voice. Just listen to it and know for yourself what it says. Could a mother want that some of her children should be happy, while others should not be happy? It is clear that God who is supremely kind would want all his creatures to be equally happy. He would want that just as air and water and light are freely available to all, even so the land must be freely available to all. All of us feel this to be a fact, though we may not have the courage to act

* From a speech at Kamakhyasthan, District Purnia, on 25-11-'53.

on it. I therefore say — Have courage and act. It is not at all difficult to do it. And then you have my assurance that you will get a thousand times more than what you give in the shape of peace and happiness within and without. The land you donate will go to some poor man who will be a friend to you all through your life.

After all, money is not the only thing that you should earn in your life. There are many other things which are vastly more important than money because they help you not only in this life but also in the difficult one after death. Money will not help you there. Even the body which we make so much of while we are here will have to be left behind. Only love and virtue and devotion that we acquire here will go with us and sustain us in that lone march from here to hereafter. Therefore cultivate and acquire love and express it in your dealings with your fellow-beings. Why do we respect and worship the great men, the saints ? — because they love men and give away all that they have in their service. We may not be able to follow their example to the same extent, but we certainly can and must do something in that way.

You have heard of the Pandavas. They were not five but six brothers, the sixth being Karna. Him they forgot. The result was bitter enmity and great destruction. In the same way, each family of five has a sixth member whom they forget. He is the poor landless labourer, the Daridranarayan. You have to recognize him and own him as one of you. He is there in your village living in hunger and ignorance and disease. Go and search him and give him his due and ward off the great destruction which is otherwise bound to overtake us.

We want that all parties, whatever their ideological or other differences, must unite in this task of uplifting the poor and rehabilitating them as equal citizens of our great nation and thus help India tide over the disaster looming ahead. It will provide an inspiring lesson to the world and give our people the taste of Swaraj. People have been expectantly awaiting that something would be done to alleviate their suffering. But the parties which exist professedly for serving them are wrangling among themselves. They do not love one another. They do not know to love man — the essential man stripped of external labels. Some of them profess to be with the poor and revile the rich as being responsible for all the evils. Others are with the rich and counsel patience till productivity in land and industries rises and there is enough wealth to go round. We say we are all brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of our Bharat Mata. Let us come together and work shoulder to shoulder for the uplift of our suffering brethren.

(Adapted from the original in Hindi)

THE PHANTASY OF LEISURE

(*By Wilfred Wellock*)

(Abridged from his *Orchard Lea Papers* No. 10, 'Leisure, Waste and Good Life'. The first instalment appeared in the previous issue of 12-12-'53.)

V

Two further causes of the postponement of the age of leisure are the increased distances people now travel to and from their work, and rapidly rising military expenditures.

The centralization of industry in large units and in large towns, and the growing demand of people to live well away from factory areas, now means that a big percentage of workers must spend from one to three hours per day in travelling to and from work, which rockets the eight-hour day into one of nine, ten and even eleven hours. In addition, the fatigue caused by the unsatisfying nature of most factory and office work today, and by rushing to and from it in order to save time, often produces a condition of nervous exhaustion which renders people incapable of enjoying what leisure is available, and certainly of engaging in pursuits which require any mental exertion.

Americans used to say that the solution was a car for every worker. They have since discovered that the big cities can't take them, and that garaging is costly in time and money. In a test which I witnessed in Philadelphia it took twenty minutes from a mid-city office to reach a four-storey garage on the outskirts of the city, where a car had been left earlier in the day, and twenty-five minutes to get it out ! Then there was the drive home.

In regard to the rising labour costs of our mounting military expenditures, I have stressed the point throughout these *Papers* that the wars and ideological conflicts of our time arise inevitably from our tension-producing economy and way of life. Fear of failing markets and supplies, and of Communism should that happen, causes the science and techniques of mass production to be applied to the means of mass destruction, the high-killing and destructive power of which intensifies fear and brings about a condition of perennial warfare cold or hot. The colossal military demands which thus arise drive many nations into permanent austerity and to the brink of bankruptcy. Today many Western States are struggling to maintain a razor-edge balance between the Welfare, and the Power, State. In consequence every social service, including education and housing, has to be cut to the bone, while the day of peace, plenty and leisure steadily recedes.

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I therefore claim that in a materialistic civilization such as now prevails in the West, the theory of salvation through leisure is a fallacy and a delusion; its Arcadia of Leisure is a phantasy. To make leisure the pivot on which life turns is to assume that work is an evil which must be endured in order to acquire the means to buy leisure, culture, and pleasure. Behind this view is the belief that the basic condition of the El Dorado of human existence is a push-button economy with work reduced as near as possible to zero.

This entire concept rests on a fallacy. In the last analysis the purpose of culture is to make a beautiful world, and in the process to make and ennoble man. Outside that process, culture degenerates into extravagance, and leisure into self-indulgence, mass excitements, mass spectacles called sport, widespread gambling and a general loosening of morals. Britain's annual expenditure on alcoholic drink, tobacco, cosmetics and sport now reaches a total of more than £ 1,500,000,000 a year. It constitutes a considerable part of the high standard of living of which we boast. Is this the best we can do ? Is it worth the cost in soulless, nerve-wrecking labour, in militarism and war ?

Pleasure is relative to the mind, to the quality of human personality. The ability to enjoy life is primarily determined by the thought and creative effort that are put into it in one's daily labour.

There is no exception to that rule. Hence, lacking creative purpose and the vital principle of self-giving, the pursuit of pleasure will become paramount, will degenerate into self-indulgence and lead to ennui, dissipation, despair and death.

The easy optimists deny this and say they want leisure for art, not self-indulgence. We are thus to anticipate a nation of poets, painters and musicians in the midst of the appalling urbanized squalor of a century of wealth and power worship which cries aloud for our understanding and compassion. But lacking creative purpose with respect to the spiritual and physical conditions of our time, what would all these artists rhapsodize about — the spreading ugliness of a standardized and veneered civilization? A virile art cannot live in a spiritual vacuum. In these drab days the primary function of all art should be to inspire our generation with visions of a better way of life, of a vital society in a spiritually stimulating environment. Art is for life, to ennoble and magnify it, not to erect ivory towers as hideouts from the squalor of our decadence. We shall not produce good poets until we first produce good builders, carpenters, plumbers, furniture makers and the rest. An age which accepts our present horrors has nothing to sing about. Once the people's songs were about their work. Today they sing: "Is you is or is you ain't my baby ?".

Others, who have managed to keep alive their deeper instincts, say they want more leisure in order to do things which war, high military expenditures, etc. prevent them from doing today — such things as designing and building a house or cultivating a creative craft as a secondary occupation. Exactly! But why build a shoddy world in our daily work and then try to replace it piecemeal in our leisure ? Why not build beautiful houses and a beautiful country from the first, under an economy that will not produce war? Are we to travel full circle from sanity to absurdity and then through economic breakdown and war back to sanity ? Even that may not be possible, for the end of our present courses is death and nihilism not sanity and life!

At root it is not the pleasures of leisure that we need but the satisfactions of creative living. We are suffering from skill hunger, the negations, the no-life of repetitive, soulless labour. If the work-life be right it will tend to pull every other part of life into its proper place, whereas if it be unsatisfying every other part of life will be equally unsatisfying. When work ceases to be creative and socially vitalizing, play degenerates while culture and religion are by-passed. Work, art, religion and culture blossom and flourish or wane and degenerate together. LIFE IS ONE, and a man who functions like a machine from Monday till Friday must not be expected to write poems on a Saturday or sing psalms on a Sunday.

From now on our aim should be to direct people's minds to creative pursuits, especially by example, eschewing the things which foster the mass mind. We must fill our lives with creative tasks as the first step towards the new creative era which is our only hope. Creative labour is the core of the good life which religion should nourish and art inspire.

(Concluded)

BHOODAN YAJNA
[Land-gifts Mission]
By Vinoba Bhave
Pages viii + 134 Price Re. 1-8-0 Postage etc. As. 6
NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD - 9

THE WAY TO COMBAT OUR POVERTY *

(*By Vinoba*)

India was once a great country, great both materially and spiritually. It built up a glorious civilization with important achievements in every field of life. The fame of its fabulous wealth had travelled far and wide and attracted traders and merchants from remote countries across the deserts and the seas. But then for various reasons it began to decline. There were internal dissensions amongst the people which weakened the nation. Some two hundred years ago, the English, who had come here like others for trade, brought it under their sway. During their rule of about a hundred years India was drained of its wealth and reduced to abject poverty. Now we are again independent but the poverty to which they reduced us remains. Even as at one time we were the wealthiest, so we are at present the poorest nation of the world.

But given the will and the effort, there is no reason why we may not change this state of affairs and regain our lost prosperity because potentially we are still as rich as we were. Firstly, we are a nation of thirty-five crores which shows that howsoever big or difficult an undertaking, we can always do it. Then our population consists of various communities belonging to different religions each of which has its distinctive qualities. This makes our richness of quality as varied as it is vast, if only we would get it to put itself to the service of the nation. Then our soil is quite fertile and we have all the seasons visiting our land, each at its due time. This makes it possible for us to grow all that we need ; the food-crops, fruits and vegetables and many other things. And then we have, crowning and vastly reinforcing all this wealth, our big mountains and long ever-flowing rivers.

All then that we need to do is to shake off our laziness, get together, and work hard and sincerely. We must first learn to love one another. The differences arising from language, religion and caste on the one side and inequalities on the other must be dissolved and love installed as the motive force of all our activities. It will improve the situation in no time. It now lies with us to improve it. We cannot blame our sufferings on the English.

We are a religious people. Each community is proud of its religion. But what good is pride if we do not practise what the religion we profess to follow asks us to do ? Every religion insists not only on the principles but also on the practice of those principles. And the central principle of every religion would be found to consist in loving one's fellow beings and helping them in their difficulties.

Why then these inequalities between the wealthy and the poor ? Happiness does not depend on wealth, it depends on the capacity and practice of love. The wealthy suffer in most cases

* From a speech at Bagnagar, Purnia, on 1-12-'53.

from physical ills and in all cases from a sense of the lack of inner satisfaction. They suffer physically because they do not do physical labour and suffer mentally because they suppress the human urge for loving one's fellow beings and helping them in their distress. Let us then practise our religions by practising love and thus remove these inequalities and all the suffering which they lead to and once more make our country wealthy and prosperous.

(Abridged from the original in Hindi)

ADVICE TO WORKERS *

(*By Vinoba*)

It would be wrong for a worker to entertain any doubt about the bona fides of those to whom he goes for collecting the donations. The local people may have an adverse opinion about some of them arising from their past experience. But the worker would not allow it to influence his judgment. Again, he would not think ill, much less talk disparagingly, of those who refuse to listen to his pleadings. He would consider such refusal just an opportunity presented to him by the person concerned to continue his efforts in the cause which he has accepted as his own. Talking ill is useless, even worse than useless because it lowers the atmosphere and harms our work. It has no power, in any case not the power which can be of help to us. The worker should therefore take care not to utter anything ill, of course, if he finds something wrong being done, he may express his views in measured terms though quite clearly. But no condemnations or violent denunciations. He must be firm in his faith that every man is good at heart and what he has to do is to bring out this goodness into the open. Besides, the times are with us and may be relied upon to exert the needed moral pressure to bring about the desired result. Thus we should go to the people with full faith in the justice of our mission and perfect trust in the goodness of the donor concerned. We will not go like beggars demeaning ourselves, for we take *dan* to mean equal sharing of wealth among the society. Nor shall we go like superiors ordering them to comply with what we say and humiliating those who do not. No, we will go as a brother to a brother, or a son to a father and ask them — our sense of love appealing to their sense of love — to part with a due share in favour of the Daridranarayana.

Next, we must try to get all the different groups of our people to co-operate with this work. The Hindus, Harijans, Mussalmans : all are concerned with it and must be made to take an active interest in its promotion. In Islam specially charity is one of the important religious injunctions which its followers are asked to carry out and I think its views in this respect are in their sociological content more advanced than what we find in Hinduism. For example, the Koran has denounced the institution of interest most emphatically which would suggest they are nearer the true economics. We have received land from Muslim friends but we must also get active workers from amongst them.

There is finally the difficulty of getting the right type of workers. We are training students in the method and ideology of our work with a view to recruiting new workers. That is good so far as it goes. But it should be clearly understood that all right thinking people, all those who have grasped the meaning and significance of this movement and have sympathy for it are to be counted among our workers. Then we should enlist the co-operation of all those who are engaged in allied constructive activities, Khadi workers and Harijan uplift workers, for example. I should like Khadi and *bhoodan* to go together. It is our experience that *bhoodan* creates a highly favourable atmosphere for the promotion of Khadi and spinning. That would suggest that for an extension of our campaign we should arrange to put a worker in every *tahsil* who would carry on both the *bhoodan* and Khadi work, the emphasis, in case he is a Khadi worker, being on Khadi. The same would apply to the Kasturba Trust, Nai Talim and Harijan Sevak Sangh workers.

The Sampatti-dan idea has been before the public for quite some time now. It is undoubtedly growing imperceptibly in its own way, though it has not yet, as was to be expected, gained much ground. This should not worry us. It is not intended for raising a fund but for introducing a new way of life, first in select individuals and then in the society. Naturally our work in this direction would proceed only slowly. Our achievement in this respect is not to be measured in money. That is not how one can measure a moral change. What is more important is the impingement of this idea on the minds of the people and the inner change which it works in them albeit quite slowly.

(Abridged from the original in Hindi)

* From a speech at Purnia, on 28-11-'53.

TOWARDS NEW EDUCATION
By Mahatma Gandhi
Pages vi + 90 Price Re. 1-4-0 Postage etc. As. 5
NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD-9

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Subscription Rates — Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 s. or $2.
Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 9.